

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7480
INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
AMEMBASSY SOFIA
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AMEMBASSY MADRID
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C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 35241

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR UR FR
SUBJECT: FRENCH-SOVIET RELATIONS: QUAI READING

REF: PARIS 31969 (NOTAL)

1. QUAI SOVIET DESK OFFICER TREMEAU CONFIRMS IMPRESSION (REFTEL) THAT BREZHNEV VISIT TO FRANCE HAS NOW DEFINITELY RECEDED TOWARD LATTER PART OF SPRING OF 1978. ALTHOUGH NO PRECISE DATE WAS SET IN WHAT TREMEAU DESCRIBED AS RECENT GISCARD-BREZHNEV EXCHANGE OF LETTERS, QUAI TOO NOW EXPECTS SECRETARY-GENERAL TO COME ONLY AFTER FRENCH MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS. TREMEAU SAID THIS REFLECTS CURRENT "DOLDRUMS" IN FRENCH-SOVIET RELATIONS, AS WELL AS TACTICAL DECISION BY SOVIETS TO AVOID SEEMING TO FAVOR GISCARD BEFORE THE MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS, WHILE LEAVING BREZHNEV FREE TO CALIBRATE THE TONE OF HIS VISIT IN LIGHT OF ELECTION RESULTS.

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2. ASKED HOW QUAI NOW SAW FRANCO-SOVIET SCENE IN GEN-

ERAL, TREMEAU SAID THAT THERE WAS NO LONGER ANY POINT IN DENYING THAT MATTERS HAD REACHED AN IMPASSE. NO SIGNIFICANT VISITS OR DEVELOPMENTS ARE FORESEEN FOR THE COMING MONTHS. MOREOVER, FOLLOWING BREZHNEV'S RECENT POINTEDLY QUALIFIED REMARKS BEFORE THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE ON THE STATE OF FRANCO-SOVIET POLITICAL RELATIONS (PARA 18, STATE 288915 NOTAL), QUAI SAW INCREASING ADVANTAGES IN NO LONGER DESCRIBING FRANCO-SOVIET RELATIONS AS PRIVILEGED OR SPECIAL, BUT SIMPLY AS THEY ARE: NEITHER EXCEPTIONALLY GOOD NOR BAD, AND AT THE MOMENT SOMEWHAT BOGGED DOWN.

3. TREMEAU ON HIS OWN INITIATIVE ALSO REFERRED TO THE CONTINUING FRANCO-SOVIET VISA WAR, ALTHOUGH THIS ACCOUNT TENDED TO COINCIDE MORE WITH REPORTS OF LOWER-LEVEL FRENCH EMBASSY OFFICIALS CITED MOSCOW'S 18540 THAN WITH AMBASSADOR DE LEUSSE'S REPORT--I.E., THAT THERE IS NOW ONLY ONE SENIOR FRENCH DIPLOMATIC VISA REQUEST OUTSTANDING, ALTHOUGH FRCH REMAIN FIRM IN REFUSING VISAS TO SOVIET INTELLIGENCE OFFICERS WHO HAD BEEN EXPELLED FROM THE UK (SEE PARIS 27041 FOR EARLIER REPORT).

4. RE REPORTED FRENCH EFFORTS TO EASE LOT OF FRENCH STUDENTS, PRESS AND BUSINESSMEN (MOSCOW 18632 AND 18543) WHICH AMBASSADOR DE LEUSSE DISCUSSED WITH GROMYKO, WE ARE VIRTUALLY CERTAIN THAT THIS IS SAME FRENCH PROJECT FORMER FOREIGN MINISTER SAUVAGNARGUES HAD ALREADY RAISED WITH GROMYKO FOR SAME REASONS DURING FORMER'S JULY 15-16 VISIT TO MOSCOW (PARIS 21468 PARA 4E). SINCE THIS IS CSCE-RELATED PROJECT FRENCH HAVE ALSO BEEN PURSUING IN OTHER FRANCO-SOVIET CONTEXTS, IT IS SURPRISING THAT AMBASSADOR DE LEUSSE APPARENTLY STILL FOUND GROMYKO UNFAMILIAR WITH IT.
RUSH

NOTE BY OC/T: DISSEMINATION COORDINATED WITH S/S-O, MR. PERITO
11/29/76.

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